

FORBID BELLI TO PRACTICE, TEXAS ASKED

Austin, Tex., March 30 (UPI)—The state bar today accused San Francisco Atty. Melvin Belli of "outrageous conduct" after the Jack Ruby trial and asked the Texas Supreme court to prohibit Belli from ever again practicing in Texas.

In a 10 page brief filed by Davis Grant, general counsel, and L. B. Adams Jr., his assistant, the state bar said Belli's "flagrant violations of the canons of ethics have shocked the conscience of not only the lawyers of Texas and the nation, but the public as well."

Assaults Outbursts

The bar accused Belli of "violent outbursts and outrageous conduct" shortly after Ruby was sentenced to die in the state's electric chair for the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, accused as killer of President Kennedy.

Attached to the brief were 40 pages of newspaper clippings. Some quoted Belli as criticizing the jury verdict as "a victory for bigotry," and calling Dallas "a festering sore . . . a little bit of Russia in the United States."

Belli has repeated the charges constantly since the March 14 verdict, the bar charged.

"Such violent outbursts and outrageous conduct on the part of respondent Melvin M. Belli were not the result of an emotional upset [at the] conviction of his client and the death penalty being assessed, but was a deliberate attempt on his part to prejudice the minds of the American public toward the administration of justice in general, and particularly the trial court, and thus the courts of Texas," the suit charged.

The lawyers cited a dispatch in the Denver, Colo., Rocky Mountain News in which Belli was quoted as saying, "All Texas isn't like this place here [Dallas]. They're going to chase this kangaroo pouch judge [Dist. Judge J. B. Brown] who sat on this case. He didn't walk to the bench, he hopped."

Brown said after the trial that Belli was one of the most brilliant lawyers ever to practice in his court. But Belli rebuked the trial judge, the suit claimed.

"I don't need Judge Brown's compliments. I'm sorry I shook hands. His hands have blood on them. He told me in private that he wouldn't have given the case up for love or money," Belli was quoted by the bar.

Change of Counsel

After the trial, Ruby's family fired Belli. They hired Atty. Percy Foreman of Houston to take his place, but Foreman quit four days later.

The chief Ruby defense lawyer now is Hubert W. Smith of Austin.

The Texas bar said that permitting Belli to continue to practice after such an outburst would endanger justice in the state. "The task of securing the services of qualified jurors will be difficult for the reason that the attorneys on the losing side could catenate them for their honest opinions expressed in their verdict and answers," the bar said.

Belli resigned from the American Bar association after ABA officials criticized his flamboyant behavior in and out of the Dallas courtroom. Newspaper editorials across the country condemned his vocal rebuttal to the jury's guilty verdict.

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